

Message Text

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P R 100324Z DEC 74

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6594

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD FOR AMBASSADOR HODGSON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR JA OVIP (FORD, GERALD R.)

SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO JAPAN

SUMMARY. THE VISIT TO JAPAN LAST MONTH OF PRESIDENT FORD
AND SECRETARY KISSINGER HAS BEEN JUDGED A COMPLETE SUCCESS
BY GOJ OFFICIALS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC. HERewith IS OUR
SUMMARY OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPRESSIONS CREATED BY
THE PRESIDENT. END SUMMARY.

GENERAL PUBLIC REACTIONS

1. PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT TO JAPAN, NOVEMBER 19-22, 1974,
WAS IN OUR VIEW A COMPLETE SUCCESS, ACHIEVING EVERY OB-
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JECTIVE THAT BOTH SIDES HAD SET FOR IT. DURING THE PRE-

VISIT PERIOD, THERE WERE GROUNDS FOR CONCERN ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S RECEPTION IN JAPAN:

- THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONTROVERSY AT ITS PEAK;
- TRADITIONAL LEFTWING OPPOSITION GROUPS ATTEMPTING TO RAISE POPULAR ANTIPATHY, EXPLOITING THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ISSUE;
- JAPANESE PREOCCUPATION WITH INFLATION, A GOVERNMENT IN TROUBLE, AND OTHER DOMESTIC CONCERNS; AND
- EVIDENCE IN THE ATTACK ON THE EMBASSY NOVEMBER 14 OF THE THREAT OF LUNATIC-FRINGE GUERRILLA ATTACKS.

NONE OF THESE MARRED THE VISIT, HOWEVER: THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONTROVERSY WAS SWEEPED OFF THE FRONT PAGES BY TANAKA'S TROUBLES; THE CONSERVATIVE ESTABLISHMENT POSTPONED THEIR INTERNAL FIGHTS UNTIL AFTER THE VISIT; THE LEFTWING EFFORTS MET WITH GENERAL DISAPPROVAL IN THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC FOR THEIR OPPOSITION TO THE VISIT; AND COMPETENT AND MASSIVE GOJ SECURITY PRECAUTIONS FORESTALLED SERIOUS DANGER OF A VIOLENT INCIDENT.

2. THE PUBLIC REACTION DURING AND SINCE THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT HAS SHOWN THAT IT WAS ALMOST UNIVERSALLY CONSIDERED AN APPROPRIATE EVENT, PROPERLY AND EVEN COLORFULLY DONE, AND THE RIGHT THING FOR JAPAN. IT WAS RIGHT FOR THE JAPANESE PEOPLE TO EXTEND THEIR TRADITIONAL HOSPITALITY TO THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT, REGARDLESS OF SPECIFIC CONTROVERSIES OR INDIVIDUAL FEELINGS. IT WAS NATURAL THAT THE HIGHLY URBAN POPULACE SHOWED LITTLE DIRECT PERSONAL EMOTION, THAT THEY VIEWED THE EVENTS ON TELEVISION RATHER THAN THRONGING STREETS, AND THAT THEY ACCEPTED THE PROPRIETY AND VALUE OF THE VISIT MATTER-OF-FACTLY AFTER THE EVENT.

3. THE DEEP INTEREST OF THE PUBLIC IN THE VISIT WAS SHOWN BY THE ATTENTION GIVEN NATIONAL TELEVISION COVERAGE OF MOST EVENTS. THE PRESS AND OUR OWN CONTACTS WITH A WIDE RANGE OF PEOPLE INDICATE A GREAT FAMILIARITY WITH WHAT OCCURRED AND DEEP INTEREST IN THE PERSONALITIES OF THE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY KISSINGER. THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONALITY ABETTED THIS PUBLIC INTEREST; MANY HAVE CHARACTERIZED HIM AS "STRAIGHTFORWARD", "SINCERE",

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"INFORMAL" AND "HUMAN".

4. INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE LARGE-SCALE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS RAISED A QUESTION WHETHER THESE NECESSARY MEASURES MIGHT OVER-SHADOW THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE VISIT. BY THE END OF THE VISIT, HOWEVER, IT SEEMED TO US THAT THE POLICE, ALTHOUGH HARDLY LESS NUMEROUS, SEEMED TO HAVE RECEDED INTO THE BACKGROUND. AN ANY RATE, THIS

IS RARELY MENTIONED IN RETROSPECT EXCEPT FOR FAVORABLE COMMENT ON THE EFFICIENCY WITH WHICH AUTHORITIES ORGANIZED SUCH A LARGE EFFORT.

5. TWO WEEKS AFTER THE VISIT THE REACTIONS OF MOST JAPANESE SEEM TO BE CHARACTERIZED BY A QUIET SATISFACTION IN THE RECOGNITION OF JAPAN BY THE U.S. SYMBOLIZED BY THE VISI AND THE MANNER IN WHICH JAPAN EXTENDED ITS HOSPITALITY, AS WELL AS BY A SENSE OF RELIEF THAT THIS UNPRECEDENTED VISIT HAS FINALLY BEEN ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT A HINT OF INCIDENT OR EMBARRASSMENT TO JAPAN.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT:

6. AS BOTH WE AND THE JAPANESE HAD SOUGHT FROM THE OUTSET, A MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT OF THE VISIT WAS TO SYMBOLIZE THE STRENGTH AND CLOSENESS OF THE U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONSHIP AND HIGHLIGHT THE ALTERED NATURE OF THAT RELATIONSHIP CHARACTERIZED BY GREATER EQUALITY, A BREADTH OF COMMON PURPOSE, AND A COMMITMENT TO SERVE THE MULTILATERAL DIMENSIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP RELATING TO GLOBAL PROBLEMS OF MUTUAL CONCERN. THIS OBJECTIVE WAS ACHIEVED THROUGH THE COMMUNIQUE. THE ROLE OF THE EMPEROR, THE STATEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY, AND THE TREATMENT GIVEN THE VISIT IN THE FOREIGN AND JAPANESE MEDIA.

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7. FOR MOST JAPANESE THE VISIT STRUCK CLOSE TO PERSONAL IDEOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. MANY HAVE CALLED IT THE FINAL COMPLETION OF THE LONG PROCESS OF ENDING WORLD WAR II. MANY HAVE SEEN THE VISIT AS A GRATIFYING SIGN THAT THE U.S. FINALLY HAS COME TO ACCEPT JAPAN AS A RESPECTED EQUAL PARTNER. THEY ALSO SEE IT AS PROPERLY DRAMATIZING THE DURABILITY AND SERIOUS PURPOSE OF OUR CLOSE RELATIONSHIP. MANY REACTED WITH EMOTION AT THE TELEVISION IMAGE OF THE EMPEROR FINALLY STANDING ON JAPANESE SOIL AND SHAKING HANDS WITH THE AMERICAN LEADER.

COMMUNIQUE:

8. SOME INITIAL PRESS AND INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE COMMUNIQUE CONTAINED SO LITTLE CONFIDENTIAL

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SPECIFIC HEADLINE MATERIAL, NO CONCRETE NEW ANNOUNCEMENT OF HISTORICAL PROPORTIONS. IN THE DAYS SINCE PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNIQUE, HOWEVER, THE REAL IMPORT OF ITS LANGUAGE HAS COME MORE CLEARLY INTO FOCUS IN PUBLIC COMMENTS. WE THINK IT MAY BE REMEMBERED LONGER THAN MOST DOCUMENTS, WITH ITS SHARPENED EMPHASIS ON THE MULTILATERAL DIMENSIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP, ITS CLEAR EFFORT TO PLACE THE MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE SECURITY TIES IN A BROADER, MORE DURABLE MEANINGFUL FRAMEWORK, AND -- PERHAPS AS IMPORTANT AS ANY OTHER POINT -- ITS PLEDGE OF CLOSE AND GENUINE CONSULTATIONS ON THE MATTERS OF MUTUAL NATIONAL CONCERN.

ROLE OF THE EMPEROR:

9. AGAINST THE PRE-VISIT NERVOUSNESS OF THE JAPANESE ESTABLISHMENT ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE EMPEROR IN THE VISIT, AND THE PROBLEM OF OUR RETURN INVITATION TO HIM, HIS EMERGENCE INTO PROMINENT PARTICIPATION TURNED OUT TO BE ONE OF THE STRONGEST POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS JAPANESE PEOPLE TOOK AWAY FROM THE VISIT.

THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD AND FOREIGN OFFICE APPEARED SURPRISED -- AND DELIGHTED -- THAT THE PUBLIC ACCEPTED FAVORABLY THE EMPEROR'S ROLE AND THE PROSPECT OF A VISIT TO THE U.S. BY HIM, WITH NONE OF THE FAMILIAR CHARGES OF POLITICAL EXPLOITATION OF THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTION. THIS MAY HAVE BEEN DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S DAYS WERE SO CLEARLY NUMBERED -- HE COULD HARDLY BE CLAIMED TO BE EXPLOITING THE EMPEROR FOR POLITICAL ADVANTAGE. IT ALSO OWED TO THE PERFORMANCE OF THE EMPEROR HIMSELF AND THE UNPRECEDENTED NATIONWIDE TELEVISION COVERAGE OF THE STATE DINNER AND OTHER CEREMONIALS. HE CAME ACROSS WITH MORE ANIMATION, PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT AND HUMANNESSTHAN PERHAPS EVER BEFORE. HE OBVIOUSLY FEELS DEEPLY ABOUT JAPAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE U.S. AND WANTS TO PLAY A DIRECT PART IN STRENGTHENING IT. THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAVE MADE THE POINT TO US THAT THE EMPEROR PERSONALLY INSISTED ON EXPRESSING IN HIS TOAST AT THE JAPANESE STATE DINNER 1) JAPAN'S GRATITUDE FOR AMERICAN SUPPORT IN ENDING THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 2) JAPAN'S

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APPRECIATION FOR AMERICAN ASSISTANCE AFTER THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE IN 1923, AND 3) INDIRECT REGRETS FOR WORLD WAR II. THE FOREIGN OFFICE NOTES THAT THESE POINTS CONSTITUTED THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE PUBLIC UTTERANCE PERMITTED THE EMPEROR SINCE 1945

10. THE IMPACT OF THE SUMMIT TALKS MAY HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO SOME EXTENT BY THE IMMINENT PROSPECT OF TANAKA'S DEPARTURE FROM OFFICE AND THE LACK OF DETAILS ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THESE DISCUSSIONS. THE FACT OF THE MEETINGS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE SECRETARY AND FOREIGN MINISTER, HOWEVER, WAS OF KEY IMPORTANCE IN THE TOTAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT. THE SECRETARY'S WILLINGNESS TO RETURN TO TOKYO TWICE TO BRIEF THE GOJ CONCERNING HIS SEOUL, VLADIVOSTOK AND PEKING VISITS PUT THE CAPSTONE ON JAPANESE ACCEPTANCE OF OUR SERIOUSNESS IN MAINTAINING A SPECIAL CONSULTATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH JAPAN. THESE TALKS HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED AS THE COMMENCEMENT OF OUR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMUNIQUE.

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11. THE MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE POINTS DISCUSSED DURING THE SUMMIT TALKS, BASED ON WHAT HAS BEEN DISCLOSED PUBLICLY BY SPOKESMEN ON BOTH SIDES, WERE CLEARLY REASSURING TO THE JAPANESE PUBLIC. IN PARTICULAR, THE FOLLOWING POINTS HAVE BEEN REPEATEDLY UNDERSCORED AS THE PRINCIPAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE TALKS THEMSELVES,

BEYOND THEIR BASIC AND OVERWHELMINGLY IMPORTANT SYMBOLIC VALUE:

-- THE PRESIDENT'S ASSURANCE THAT THE U.S. WOULD NOT IMPOSE EXPORT RESTRICTIONS ON FOOD AND WOULD MEET JAPANESE REQUIREMENTS IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER;
-- THE PLEDGE BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY THAT THE U.S. WILL COOPERATE IN MEETING JAPANESE ENERGY REQUIREMENTS. IN THIS CONNECTION IT WAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC ALIKE THAT
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WE REASSURED THEM THAT THE U.S. DOES NOT SEEK CONFRONTATION WITH PRODUCERS AND WE RETAIN SERIOUS HOPE

OF WORKING TOGETHER WITH FRANCE;
-- THE PRESIDENT'S FIRM DETERMINATION TO WORK
FOR PASSAGE OF THE U.S. TRADE REFORM BILL;
-- THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY'S CLEAR
INTENTION TO CONTINUE TO WORK FOR THE DETENTE PROCESS
WITH THE USSR AND THE PRC;
-- OUR REAFFIRMATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE
SECURITY TREATY SYSTEM, AT THE SAME TIME THAT WE
UNDERScoreD THE BROADER CONTEXT OF ITS VALUE TO BOTH
NATIONS;
-- OUR SMOOTH HANDLING OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS
ISSUE, AVOIDING MENTION IN THE COMMUNIQUE BUT LISTENING
UNDERSTANDINGLY TO JAPANESE PRESENTATIONS OF THE
SENSITIVITY OF THE PROBLEM; AND
-- THE PRESIDENT'S BROACHING OF THE FISHERIES
PROBLEM ALSO MADE A STRONG IMPRESSION AND MAY HAVE
BEEN A FACTOR IN THE FISHERIES NEGOTIATIONS JUST CON-
CLUDING.

12. IT SEEMED TO US THAT PRESENTATIONS BY THE
JAPANESE LEADERS IN THE TOKYO DISCUSSIONS WERE FRANK
AND FORTHCOMING, MARKED BY A CONFIDENT INTEREST IN
THE BROADER CONCERNS OF THE TWO NATIONS, AND
NOTABLY DEVOID OF THE FAMILIAR PAROCHIALISM THAT
HAS SOMETIMES DOMINATED GOJ APPROACHES TO SUCH
MEETINGS. SINCE THE VISIT, GOJ OFFICIALS HAVE
UNIVERSALLY EXPRESSED COMPLETE SATISFACTION WITH THE
SUMMIT TALKS, AND HAVE MADE CLEAR THEIR SPECIFIC
APPRECIATION OF THE SECRETARY'S EFFORTS TO CONSULT
WITH THEM. THIS MAY MARK THE END OF THE REACTION TO
OLD "SHOCKS".

CONCLUSION:

13. IN SUMMARY, WE BELIEVE THE PRESIDENT'S HISTORICAL
VISIT TO JAPAN WAS A TOTAL SUCCESS IN EVERY WAY. IT
HAS GIVEN US SUBSTANCE WITH WHICH TO WORK FOR A
LONG TIME TO COME. IT HAS CREATED AN ATMOSPHERE FOR
OUR RELATIONSHIP WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN HEALTHIER AND
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MORE CONDUCTIVE TO SOLID WORK TOGETHER. AND IT HAS
LEFT A STRONGLY POSITIVE IMPRESSION AMONG THE JAPANESE
PEOPLE THAT FREES US FROM MANY OF THE INHIBITIONS AND
PROHIBITIONS THAT HAVE COLORED THE RELATIONSHIP
DURING THE LAST GENERATION.
THE VISIT WAS HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT TO BOTH NATIONS.
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